





	breed
Eyes	Usually dark, brown or light brown, rarely of other colors
Ecology	
Lifespan	10 - 15 years, although in some rare case dogs have been seen reaching, 20 or even 25 years
Intelligence	Beast-like
Nature	Variable, depending on the breed
Range	World
Habitat	In human and non-human settlements, rarely the wild
Diet	Carnivorous



## History



A Nilfgaardian War Shepherd

According to the elves, unlike cats, there were no dogs before the arrival of humans in the world. Some scholars theorize that humans brought dogs during the [First Conjunction of the Spheres](#) in the 230s BR. Since this event introduced many creatures to the Continent, possibly including the canine companions of humans. The bond between humans and dogs has since evolved, with dogs serving various roles from guardians and hunters to companions and war assets. However, the fact that steel works against dogs suggests that they may have existed in the world before as wild dogs or wolves.

Early humans, such as the Dauk and Wogzor, may have domesticated them, eventually evolving them into dogs. The elves for their part found no interest or use for them until human domination became widespread and guerrilla groups such as the Scoia'tael and the Mchwa in [Zangvebar](#) were born.

Over time, the role of dogs expanded beyond mere companionship. In many cultures, they became symbols of loyalty and bravery. Historical records and tales from various human kingdoms often depict dogs as protectors of homes, aids in hunting, and even participants in warfare. Notable historical canines include the war dogs of the Nilfgaardian Empire, trained to fight alongside soldiers, and the herding dogs of the Skellige Isles, essential for managing livestock in the rugged terrain.

## Abilities

Unlike cats, dogs cannot absorb magical energy, which is one reason they can be cursed. Cats use magical energy for protection, including immunity to most curses and their famous "nine lives," which is another form of protection in near-death cases. Dogs, however, lack this inherent magical shield, making them susceptible to various forms of magic, including curses. This vulnerability can lead to transformations that turn otherwise gentle creatures into fearsome beasts.



A dog of the Šom Inu breed from the Tuyotuki Islands

However, like cats, dogs can instantly recognize witchers. Unlike most felines, dogs do not exhibit disdain for [witchers](#) (with the exception of [School of the Cat](#) witchers, due to their corrupted mutations which create a certain affinity between these rogue witchers and certain breeds of cats). On the contrary, dogs show a strong affinity and loyalty toward witchers, even more so than to normal humans. The reason for this is unclear but may be linked to some

form of affinity with the witchers' magical aura or pheromones that resonate with canines' heightened senses.

Dogs are highly trainable, making them valuable allies in hunting and combat scenarios. Their keen sense of smell and hearing surpasses that of humans, enabling them to track and detect enemies, prey, or hidden threats. While dogs cannot see through invisibility like cats, they can detect ghosts, a trait cats do not possess. Their acute senses also make them excellent at tracking missing persons or valuable items, and they have been known to alert their owners to impending danger, such as natural disasters.

## Behavior

Dogs' behavior can vary significantly depending on their environment and treatment. Domesticated dogs are typically loyal, protective, and obedient, often forming strong bonds with their human companions. This bond is a result of thousands of years of selective breeding and mutual dependence. Dogs provide companionship, security, and assistance in various tasks, from herding livestock to guiding the blind.



A Novigradian High Dog, one of the smallest breeds of dogs in the Northern Kingdoms, present in many noble houses for companionship

However, when exposed to neglect, mistreatment, or various types of magic, their behavior can shift dramatically. Cursed dogs, for instance, exhibit heightened aggression and unpredictability, often attacking without provocation. This transformation can be triggered by various factors, including exposure to cursed objects, consumption of tainted food, or the influence of extraplanar entities such as lesser hymns. Cursed dogs may also show physical signs of their condition, such as matted fur, glowing eyes, and an unnatural aura that repels other animals.

In wild or feral states, dogs revert to pack behavior, establishing hierarchies and hunting patterns reminiscent of their wolf ancestors. They become more territorial and aggressive, especially when food or mates are scarce. Packs of feral dogs can pose significant threats to rural communities, livestock, and even travelers. These packs often roam the outskirts of villages and towns, scavenging for food and occasionally attacking when desperate.

## Dog Breeds



Humans breed dogs for multiple purposes, resulting in a diverse range of breeds with specialized traits. These breeds vary in size, temperament, and abilities, tailored to fulfill specific roles in human society. Below are some of the most notable breeds and their primary functions:

### Guard Dogs

Renowned for their protective instincts and loyalty. Trained to defend properties and their owners, these dogs are often employed by nobles and merchants to deter thieves and intruders.

- Lyrian Guard Dog
- Saint Lebioda Dog

### Hunting Dogs

Possess exceptional tracking abilities and a keen sense of smell, making them invaluable in hunting expeditions. These dogs can follow trails over long distances, locate hidden game, and even retrieve downed prey.

- Shiba Inu
- Šom Inu
- Medium Okamese Hunting Breed

### Herding Dogs

Integral to managing livestock. Their intelligence and agility allow them to herd sheep, cattle, and goats efficiently, ensuring the animals remain safe and organized.

- Skellige Shepherd

### War Dogs

Trained for combat, equipped with armor, and capable of taking down enemies on the battlefield.

- Aerdinian War Shepherd
- Nilfgaardian War Shepherd

### Companion Dogs

Primarily kept for companionship. Their friendly and affectionate nature makes them ideal pets, providing emotional support and comfort to their owners.

- Novigradian High Dog
- Wyziman Dog

### Sled Dogs

Essential for transportation in colder regions, such as Kovir. These strong and resilient dogs are harnessed to sleds, capable of traversing snowy terrains and carrying supplies over long distances.

- Kovirian Sleg Dog

## Rescue Dogs

Trained to assist in search and rescue operations. Their size and strength enable them to navigate rough terrains and locate individuals trapped in avalanches, collapsed buildings, or other perilous situations.

- Zerrikanian Tracker

## Famous Dogs

- Frey: The dog that the witcher, explorer, and one of the founders of the [School of the Crane](#), [Putnam Pitch](#), brought with him from the [Tuyotuki Islands](#) after saving him from a fire during his time in the Far Eastern Islands. He was of the Śom Inu breed, a hunting breed used to hunt large beasts such as tigers and bears.
- [Lenok I](#): The Aerdrinian War Shepherd that belonged to the grandmaster of the [School of the Fox](#), [Adalwulf of Aedirn](#), acquired through the Law of Surprise in 1226.
- [Knickers](#): Perhaps one of the most famous dogs in Nordling history. A dog of the Shiba Inu breed who ended up in Nordling lands and in the hands of Queen Meve of Lyria and Rivia during the Second Northern War. Originally a gift from Tuyotukian diplomats to the Nilfgaardian secret service member Stefan Skellen during the Nilfgaardian — Tuyotukian diplomatic encounter in the island of [Mekan](#) in 1257, the dog escaped during Stefan's time in Ebbing, eventually reaching the Northern Kingdoms. He died in 1272 at the age of fifteen, the usual lifespan of his breed, and was buried in the local cemetery of the city of Lyria with full honors.

## Trivia

- Most of the dog breeds mentioned, with the exception of those that already appear in The Witcher canon, are fictional breeds created by mixing two or more real-world breeds. The only exception is the Śom Inu, which is almost identical to the Akita Inu. The differences include blue eyes and a fur similar to that of the Akita Inu but adapted to tropical/subtropical environments rather than extreme cold.
- Based on the design done for The Witcher 3, the Saint Lebioda Dog Breed appear to be a mix between Doberman and Canis Pantera breeds.

## Notes

- Article free to edit while respecting the previous information. Feel free to expand by adding new dog breeds.
- In case anyone wants to make article of the Śom Inu breed, here is a explanation of the main differences with the Akita:

*The Śom Inu's fur, while retaining the dense, double-layered characteristic of the Akita Inu, has undergone adaptations suited to the tropical and subtropical climates of the Tuyotuki Islands. Instead of the thick, insulating undercoat designed to trap heat in frigid conditions, the Śom Inu's undercoat is lighter and more breathable, providing sufficient protection against temperature fluctuations without causing overheating. The outer coat remains water-resistant, crucial for the humid, often rainy environments of the islands, but it is slightly shorter and sleeker to prevent the matting and heaviness that would occur with the Akita Inu's fur in such a climate. The Śom Inu's temperament is also slightly more aggressive than the Akita Inu, making them formidable hunting companions in the jungles and mountainous terrains of the Tuyotuki Islands. The blue eyes are a stylistic trait bred by Tuyotukian breeders, based on the belief that such eyes would make monsters afraid and repel them.*

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